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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001726

SIPDIS

TRANSPORTATION FOR FAA
DAKAR PLS PASS TO FAA REP ED JONES
ROME PLS PASS TO TSA REP JOHN HALINSKI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/03/2015
TAGS: [CASC](#) [FAIR](#) [NI](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: BELLVIEW CRASH: WHERE ARE THE NIGERIANS!

REF: LAGOS 1708 AND PREVIOUS

1. (C) Summary. The USG forensic team arrived at crash site on November 3 at 1000 (local time). Recovery and investigation efforts continue to be hampered by heavy rain on November 1 and November 3, impeding excavation efforts as muddy roads prevented access to the crash site. The crater has filled 12 feet deep with water. On-site coordination remains poor, and the USG forensic team had minimal police support. Requests for hand tools, a security fence, increased forensics support and police involvement have not been met. Meanwhile, the National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB) team continued to interview Bellview representatives, transport aircraft parts to the aircraft hanger, and review Bellview flight crew records. The flight data and cockpit voice recorders have yet to be found. End Summary.

Rain Hampers Site Access, Collection;
Crash Crater Filled With Water

2. (C) Bad weather conditions are hindering excavation efforts. The USG forensic team could not gain access to the crash site on November 1-2 due to poor road conditions. Their requests for manual hand tools such as shovels, sifting screens, trowls, and sheaves have not been met by the GON. Director of Accidents Investigation and Prevention Bureau (AIPB) Angus Ozoka said AIPB would provide hand tools, and a large water pump and power generator on November 4 to remove water from the crater. Ozoka discounted suggestions for a tarp to cover the crater. He said the water pump and power generator should be sufficient to drain the water. Heavy rain and excavation on October 31 have caused the crater to expand to 80 feet north to south and 60 feet east to west, making collection more difficult.

Nigerian Support For USG Team Uncoordinated, Spotty

3. (C) The forensic team found no security fence on November 3 and complained that local police were not providing requested assistance. The team spent significant time persuading local police to participate in forensic collection. No Nigerian official is coordinating collection efforts on site. The Navy, local police, the Red Cross, a Bellview representative, one Ogun State secret serviceman, and the Nigerian Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) were at the scene, but are not acting in a coordinated manner. AIPB Director Ozoka said they did not provide requested equipment and human resources on November 3 because he believed bad weather and muddy road conditions would prevent the USG team from accessing the site.

Refrigerated Trucks Fail To Appear

4. (C) The Omega Funeral Home company, which was contracted by the GON to send a daily refrigerated truck to the site to store and transport body part remains, failed to arrive on November 3. The forensic team collected 15 bags of body parts but was forced to store these outdoors. AIPB Director Ozoka said the funeral home company would be present on site November 4 and that more police trained in forensics, as well as the Ogun State Police Commissioner, would arrive to assist the USG team. Site integrity continues to be compromised by visits from relatives, villagers, and religious figures.

NTSB Focuses on Interviews and Bellview Records

5. (C) NTSB Representative Dennis Jones interviewed the Bellview Director of Flight Operations for over three hours on November 2 and spoke on November 4 with Bellview's Director of Human Resources to obtain flight crew employment and background history. The NTSB team continued to interview

authorities, transport aircraft parts to the aircraft hangar, and review Bellview records. They were increasingly pessimistic that the flight data and cockpit voice recorders would be found. The NTSB team stayed at the Federal Aviation Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) headquarters on November 1-4 to review documents, interview Bellview representatives, and transport aircraft parts to the aircraft hangar.

16. (C) Comment. The USG assistance team is resisting Nigerian efforts to transform the recovery and investigation into a USG-led effort. Local villagers appeared ready to cover the crater, build a memorial, and forget completely about the crash. Bad weather conditions, the GON's slow response in providing equipment and resources, and bad roads have hindered excavation efforts. These conditions have set the USG forensic team back several days. Staff in Lagos and Abuja have made necessary contacts, and senior GON officials have agreed to the necessary steps, but these steps clearly have not been implemented. The GON must deploy more consistent support for the recovery and investigation if this effort is to be successful. End Comment.
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